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Our Mission to the Far East

REPORT BY
MR. SAMUEL MASON



Hebrew Sheltering and Immigrant Aid Society
of America

229-231 East Broadway

New York City



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A FOREWORD

We present, herewith, the report of Mr. Samuel Mason upon his mission in the Far East. It is a document that will be read with intense interest, for it gives us not merely an account of what Mr. Mason accomplished during the six months he labored in Yokohama, Harbin and Vladivostock, but it will serve as a guide of what is yet to be done.

Mr. Mason arrived in Yokohama on the first day of this year, and from that very moment until the day of his departure July 7th, he spent every minute in creating a machinery for the relief of the thousands of refugees who have thus far been rescued and for the saving of the thousands and thousands more who must in the future be taken care of by the Hebrew Sheltering and Immigrant Aid Society of America.

No one can read the report without failing to recognize the wisdom of the choice of the Board of Directors. Mr. Mason brought to bear upon this work his many years of experience of immigrant aid work, his complete understanding of the character of the refugees and his broad sympathies for suffering humanity.

The refugees were found in a most terrible plight. For months they had been driven from pillar to post, had suffered most grievously at the hands of officials, had been robbed of their funds, had undergone every conceivable and inconceivable hardship. That the unfortunate women and children were able to overcome the ordeal is evidence of their tenacity and pluck, which was, no doubt, buoyed up by the hope that somewhere there must be some people, there must be an organization, that would come to their rescue.

Mr. Mason had to engage in many delicate diplomatic negotiations; international law, immigration laws, passport restrictions and above all, the exigencies of a war had to be considered. His terse statement of the support he received from the United States representatives, the Japanese Government, the British Officials, and from such Russian Officials as could be reached does not tell the whole story. The discerning reader may understand what a herculean task, what very careful thought, what diplomacy, all this entailed.

The Society in asking Mr. Mason to undertake the work felt that it put the task upon a man who would discharge it in a manner that would redound to the honor of American Jewry.

The report indicates that there has been created an organization in the Far East that will have far-reaching effects in stabilizing Jewish life. Mr. Mason has given to American Jewry, to the world, the most comprehensive report of the condition of Russian Jewry.

Mr. Mason has laid before the Society definite plans for the future. Tens of thousands of Jewish refugees will have to be provided for.

The Hebrew Sheltering and Immigrant Aid Society of America is inestimably proud of the privilege to have inaugurated the work and to have been able to carry it through thus far. It will not fail in the future.

JOHN L. BERNSTEIN, President.

HEBREW SHELTERING AND IMMIGRANT AID SOCIETY OF AMERICA.

OUR MISSION TO THE FAR EAST

REPORT BY MR. SAMUEL MASON

To the President and Board of Directors,
Hebrew Sheltering and Immigrant Aid
Society of America.

Gentlemen:—

After an absence of eight months and twenty days I have returned from the Far East arriving in New York on August 5th.

I herewith beg to present to you my report of my activities during this period.

In accordance with your instructions, authorized at a meeting of your Board in October, 1917, I left New York on November 16th, 1917 bound for Japan.

The Journey

Seattle, Washington, was my first stop. There I spent several days in consultation with the officers and workers of the Seattle branch with a view of studying the facilities for the care of women and children—war refugees. I also visited the United States Immigration Station paying my respects to the officials there.

Portland, Ore., was visited next and I held conferences with Messrs. Ben Selling and David N. Mosessohn.

Thence to San Francisco where I stayed several days in conference with the officers and workers of the Society's branch in that city. I desired to ascertain whether they had any facilities for more extensive work. In that city too I called upon the officials of the United States Immigration Station.

On December 17th I reached Vancouver, B. C. There I conferred with representative Jews as to the possible needs that might arise from trans-pacific immigration of war-refugees to that port. I also deemed it advisable to call upon the United States Immigration Inspector-in-Charge and the Dominion Immigration Inspector-in-Charge. I further conferred with representatives of the Canadian Pacific Ocean Services, Limited, and succeeded in reaching a working agreement relative to steamship accommodation from the Far East.

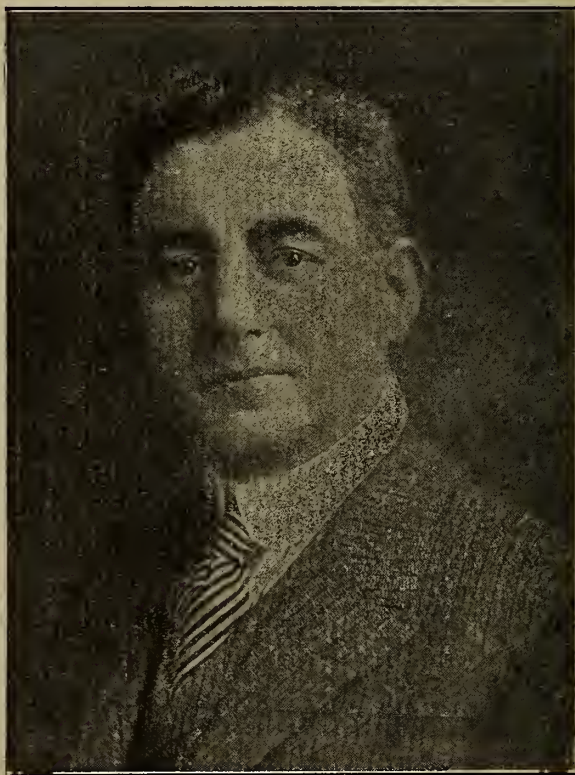
December 20th I sailed on the S. S. Empress of Asia arriving in Yokohama January 1st, 1918.

The Situation in Yokohama

Arriving at Yokohama I found that steps had been taken to make some provision for the refugees. But it soon became evident that there would have to be radical changes if the well-being of the refugees was to be served.

The old Royal Hotel, at 87 Yamashita-cho had been rented before my arrival, by the local Emigrant Aid Society. The funds for the purpose had been furnished by Mr. M. Ginz-

burg, though Mr. B. W. Fleischer had secured an option on the premises and was in receipt of \$3,000 from our Society transmitted through Mr. Jacob H. Schiff, for the sole purpose of renting and partially equipping the house as a shelter for war-refugees. Mr. Fleischer was not in Japan for a little while and meanwhile the Emigrant Aid Society had interested Mr. Ginzburg in the work succeeding in securing a lease for one year on the premises.



SAMUEL MASON

Mr. Ginzburg set aside 12,000 yen upon the understanding that that sum would suffice for one year's maintenance. This was in accordance with an estimate submitted to him by Mr. B. Kirshbaum, the president of the Emigrant Aid Society. The sum was turned over to Mr. Maurice Russel as custodian and administrator. The latter named the house. "The Ginzburg Home for Russian Emigrants." This fact gave it the widest publicity in the native and foreign press and the Home was recognized as an institution.

A number of kind-hearted, charitable ladies among them Mesdames Ginzburg, Isaacs, Ber- rick and Neville then interested themselves in the work, to the extent of supplying clothes for the half-naked inmates of the Home. They

subsequently organized a Ladies Committee of the Ginzburg Home for Russian Emigrants.

However it was not long before a clash occurred between the Ginzburg Home, the Emigrant Aid Society and the Ladies Committee. They simply failed to understand their respective aims. The situation became so aggravated that at one time serious disorder among the refugees was threatened, one organization throwing the blame for the occurrence upon the other. Japanese police had to be called in to prevent disturbance and from that time until the night of February 11th when I officially opened the Home in the name of our Society, a policeman was stationed day and night at the corner.

Originally the Royal Hotel had been a well-equipped house. It had everything that a good hotel should have. Electricity, gas, beds and bedding, tables and chairs, dining room, kitchens and store rooms, well furnished lounging parlors, a very fine sun room, a billiard room and even an immensely large skating rink.

The gentlemen who rented the hotel were asked to pay Y7,000 for all the furniture and equipment. But they decided that it was all too good for the purpose. They wanted none of it, and so permitted everything to be sold at auction, including the floor of the skating rink, nearly all of the toilet bowls, all the gas piping, several of the ranges and every one of the electric chandeliers. The Royal Hotel had been metamorphosed into an almost dilapidated building.

No sooner had I reached Yokohama than I was informed that the "Russian Home" was the filthiest place. The Russian people are so terribly filthy, I was told. Hence the reason for the deplorable state of the "Royal Hotel." No one could pass the place, I was further told, without acknowledging the absolute truth of the statement.

In order to get away from people who had preconceived notions and who were prejudiced, as were my new acquaintances, I determined to strike out in a different direction. Mr. Silberberg, of whom I will speak later, accompanied me. There was another reason for avoiding the vicinity of the Home. I wanted to familiarize myself with the conditions under which the Home was founded and conducted. However, as we started to walk I scented the place where the refugees were kept. The odor was exactly as described. I then knew where the house was situated.

I waited a few days before visiting the house. By that time I had acquainted myself with the relations of the various societies to each other, as well as with the reason of their contempt for the "filthy Russians."

In my letter of January 8th I described the condition of the house as I found it. Suffice it to say that by January 15th, all the three

organizations had been dissolved, the lease of the house assigned to our Society and extended to April 1, 1919, and a host of carpenters, plumbers, painters, paper hangers and electricians installed and working at top-speed to make the house fit once more for human habitation.

On February 11th, we officially announced that the house belonged to the Hebrew Sheltering and Immigrant Aid Society of America.

There was a public celebration in honor of the event and in response to our invitations a large number of American and British residents, as well as many Japanese were gathered in the large hall we had furnished. Addresses were made by Mayor Ando, of Yokohama, Hon. Geo. H. Scidmore the United States Consul-General, M. Wilm, the Russian Consul-General, Mr. Maurice Russel and others.

The same evening an entertainment was given by some of the adult emigrants and the children. Hebrew, Russian and English songs were rendered, followed by American patriotic exercises.

The phonograph records, kindly presented by Mrs. Mandel, a member of the Board of Directors of the Rose N. Lesser Auxiliary were made good use of that evening as they were on many subsequent evenings.

When the ceremonies attending the official opening of the Home were at an end, the representative of the Yokohama Police Department took his departure from in front of the premises. He never returned.

The House To-day

To-day the house looks modern, clean and in every respect representative of the high purpose it is serving. From a conspicuous place proudly waves the Stars and Stripes every day of the week. In the main corridor is a photograph of President Wilson draped in an American flag, with a Jewish flag to right and a Japanese flag to the left.

One room is used for classes. Upon the blackboard is written the English alphabet. For the benefit of the adults as well as the children, classes in English are regularly conducted.

Another room is utilized for religious worship. Services are held daily, morning, afternoon and evening.

The beautiful sun-room has been equipped as a play room for the children, where they are introduced the American national game, bats and balls being provided for them.

The floor of the old skating rink has been replaced with cheaper flooring, but is new, clean, painted and oiled. It is now a fine dormitory, capable of accommodating 116 persons, and if the need should arise twice that number.

Eight new lavatories have been installed; the old ones have been replaced by new. Four shower baths have been put in and the old wood-

en bathtubs made fit for use. Electric wiring was extended throughout the house. The gas was reconnected with the street main and in the kitchen several gas ranges were installed and the coal range, which had been put out of commission was repaired.

A large room in the basement was fitted up with shelves and lights and is now used as a store room for baggage.

A small vacant Japanese bungalow in the yard has been converted into a store room for foodstuffs.

A second small house in the rear has been turned into a laundry for the use of the inmates. I found that families had not changed their linen in 14 weeks.

We placed tables and chairs in the dining rooms. American, Jewish and Japanese flags decorate the walls of the principal rooms.

At least two lectures were given every week. We never failed to give a talk on Hygiene; the other was devoted to Americanization.

A Canadian Jewish merchant, exclaimed after a visit to the Home, "This Home is a living monument to the glory of American Jewish charitable enterprise."

The present status of the Home is as follows:

Our lease will not expire until April 1st, 1919. The rental is 300 yen per month, with an additional rental of 25 yen per month for a floor in an adjoining house devoted to shelter men adults.

The house is completely equipped with the exception of bed screens which were to be bought after my departure, and without which, sleeping in that part of Japan during the remaining summer months is absolutely impossible.

The following regular employes are engaged in the work of conducting the Home and caring for the welfare of the refugees from the moment of their arrival in Japan until they leave for their respective destinations:

Aron Kasakewitch, Executive Secretary.

Josef Silberberg, In charge of transportation, passports and finances.

Louis Mandelbaum, Meeting refugees at Tsuruga and Shimonoseki.

Malkiel Godlin, Schochet, Mashgiach and Cantor.

J. Borokovsky, Cook.

Isidore Gold, Caretaker and Custodian.

Abram Rodoff, Night watchman.

Max Rochlin, Waiter.

One Japanese Porter.

Two Japanese Maids.

One Russian Maid.

Dr. Reidhaar, House Physician.

Dr. Rukoku, Eye Specialist.

The monthly Budget exclusive of loans and special house furnishing under the present con-

ditions amounts to 4586 Yen. Details will be found in the appendix.

This budget does not include the monthly appropriations for Vladivostok and Harbin which should be 1000 roubles and 1500 roubles respectively.

A word as to the engagement of Mr. Josef Silberberg. Your Board will recall that Mr. Silberberg was formerly the Steward of the Seattle Branch. I met him on board the steamship the Empress of Asia, bound for Harbin, where he was to meet his wife and child. Arriving at Yokohama, he learned that his family while on the way from Odessa to Harbin was compelled to return to Odessa and that he would not be able to proceed to Harbin unless willing to be drafted into the military service of one of the revolutionary forces. Consequently Mr. Silberberg remained with me in Yokohama acting in various capacities, and I finally placed him in charge of the transportation and passport work, in addition to discharging the duties of cashier.

I have purposely dwelt upon what I may term the physical side of the work so that your Board may realize the almost revolutionary changes that had to be made at the very outset, so that there might be no disturbance of the work in the future.

Refugees Assisted

Up to the day of my departure from Japan, 1706 persons had been rescued by our Society, from disease, starvation and poverty. After a period of general convalescence, when we were satisfied of their fitness to travel and their eligibility for admission into the United States, they entered upon the final stages of their journey which reunited them with their kin and from whom they had been forced to be separated by conditions arising from the war.

Among these unfortunates were 106 non-Jews of different nationalities and religious beliefs, such as Poles, Slavs, Armenians, Syrians, Persians who were Roman Catholics, Greek Catholics or Protestants.

Your prompt and liberal responses to my appeals for financial support, the beautiful spirit of Zedokah permeating Mr. Schiff's encouraging letters and the humanitarian attitude of the United States Government enabled me to accord to these the fullest attention and care of their material needs as well as particular consideration for their spiritual wants.

The social status of those rescued was as follows:

Adult males	172
Adult females	624
Children of both sexes, under age of 16	910

TOTAL.....1706

They were destined to relatives as follows:

To husbands	432
To parents	947
To brothers and sisters	133
To sons and daughters	63
To uncles, aunts and nephews	50
To cousins	7
To friends	53
To wives	21

TOTAL.....1706

The following were their destinations, refugees leaving on steamers from Yokohama or Kobe:

To the United States	1551
Canada	103
South Africa	15
Hawaiian Islands	11
Argentina	10
China	4
India	1
Returned to Siberia at our expense	11

TOTAL.....1706

The social status of the adults was:

Married	559
Single	204
Widowed	33

TOTAL.....796

Another refugee, not included in the total number, who was afflicted with tuberculosis died on February 1st. Having been a member of the Greek Catholic Church in his own country, our Society arranged the burial in accordance with the rites of his faith. We purchased a plot on the local cemetery for him and paid the funeral expenses from our funds. His name was Gregori Mishin, aged 26. He came from Tcherepowitz, Novogrodsky Gubernia and was originally destined to Honolulu.

The eleven returned to Siberia were such that they could not possibly meet the requirements of the United States immigration laws. Their physical, mental or intellectual condition prejudiced them from entry. The task of sending these eleven back to Siberia was as difficult as it was heart-rending. But there is the consolation in the fact that all we did was in the best interests of the United States.

On April 8th, I left for Harbin accompanied by the American Vice Consul-General, Mr. Lester L. Schnare, who however, was only able to remain with me for a couple of days. I stayed till May 2nd and then went to Nikolsk and Vladivostok, returning to Yokohama on May 14th.

The result of that trip was that, besides affording immediate relief to 311 family groups, I organized the Central Information Bureau for Jewish War Sufferers in the Far East with permanent branches at Harbin and Vladivostok. I also arranged for special trips of accredited representatives to various cities in Manchuria

and Siberia for the purpose of establishing connections with our new Bureaus. The headquarters of the Central Information Bureau are at our Home in Yokohama.

One of the redeeming features of my otherwise saddening experiences in Harbin and Vladivostok was my ability to prevent futile trips by a considerable number of persons who, in my judgment, were below the standard required of those eligible for admission into the United States, thus sparing them the great expense as well as the misery of inevitable deportation.

Owing to the abnormal conditions in Siberia and Russian Manchuria it was impossible to obtain accurate figures of the number of Jewish refugees there. However, conservative estimates made by reliable persons placed the number of such Jewish refugees above 20,000, all scattered east of the Urals. They are mostly broken families; all claiming kin in the United States.

It appears that the Russian authorities, as well as the Jewish Relief Societies in Russia, have made it a practice since the outbreak of the war and the close of trans-Atlantic passenger traffic to divert almost all refugees claiming blood relations in the United States towards Eastern Siberia.

The number of refugees I left in Japan including Yokohama, Tokyo and Kobe was 154 of whom 93 were in our shelter.

The Road to Japan

The refugees from Russia and Manchuria find their way into Japan through two main routes. From Russia they arrive via Vladivostok by steamship across the Sea of Japan. The landing is made at Tsuruga every Monday morning.

From Manchuria the journey is made by rail with various changes until Fusan, Korea, is reached. There they embark on a steamer which takes 12 hours to reach Shimonoseki, Japan. The last stage is made by rail, requiring about thirty hours to get to Yokohama. As a rule refugees arrive on Sunday morning, though quite often they come on mid-week days as well.

As far as the arrivals from Vladivostok are concerned a steamer never fails to bring some refugees. It often happened however, that owing to internal troubles in Siberia between the Bolsheviks and their opponents the steamer was unable to leave Vladivostok.

There are always between 50 and 100 refugees being cared for by our Bureau at Vladivostok. They manage to get to Vladivostok in some roundabout way from Irkutsk; it is rarely, if ever, a continuous trip. Along the whole country-side from Irkutsk via Habarovsk to Vladivostok there are hundreds of refugees stranded. Of course not all are Jews. The majority

in fact are non-Jews. The Jewish refugees as soon as they manage to get sufficient funds to take them to the next station, bringing them closer to Vladivostok, proceed. At times it takes two months to cover a journey of 1500 miles. On the way they meet with discouragement. They are advised not to go to Vladivostok both by unsympathetic travelers who usually go in the opposite direction and by the different communities who have been asked by the Vladivostok Jewish Committee not to permit any more refugees to come there until ready to provide for them.

At Harbin there are thousands of refugees, many of them sleeping in court yards, sheds and even among the Chinese. Jews are always to be found among others sleeping at the railroad stations. The old Jewish Relief Committee at Harbin is dominated by officials that simply do not wish to make any systematic effort to help these unfortunate people. Most of the refugees had once applied to the community but meeting with discouragement, never cared to ask for aid again. Only a small percentage of the refugees are receiving communal aid.

How they manage to live is a mystery, as it is difficult to obtain legitimate employment in that city.

Most of the refugees rescued from Harbin, who were sought by relatives in America were reached through newspaper advertisements which were inserted in the local press asking them to call at a stated hour at the office of the local Relief Committee.

I had arranged that the Secretary of the Relief Committee should receive the applications of all those who would respond. To my great dismay I learned later that a big crowd had gathered near the office and that the Secretary instead of receiving the applications had told the applicants that the "Americanetz" was not there and it was no use for them to wait. As it was not their first disappointment in their dealings with the "Komitat" they never came again. After this I remained at the office of the Committee for several days, receiving the applications of those who called after the hour designated in the advertisement. It was these people we helped to become reunited with their families in America.

Since opening our Harbin Bureau, many come with requests to locate their relatives in this country. These requests made on special forms are forwarded on to Yokohama and thence to our main office in New York. Since my arrival here the Society has received several letters containing such requests from Harbin transmitted through the Yokohama Bureau.

As to Vladivostok, the main trouble there is with the male refugees who are not given any assistance by the local community. Their con-

dition is most deplorable; they are actually picking up crumbs of bread wherever they can find them, and they sleep in any shed they can find along the railroad tracks. Their number is very large. In the course of my investigation in Vladivostok I came across several hundreds at the railroad station at five o'clock one morning. Their pitiful pleas and the recital of their horrible plight nearly broke my heart, particularly so since I felt that I was powerless to do anything.

The Bureaus

A summary of the work in connection with the establishing of the Bureaus show that the Bureau at Yokohama is now a thoroughly organized and well established institution bearing the name of our Society, with permanent correspondents at Tokyo, Kobe and Nagassaki.

The one at Vladivostok, having direct communication with all the Jewish communities in Siberia, is conducted very efficiently.

The main purpose of the Bureau at Harbin is to meet the most urgent needs of Jewish war refugees in Manchuria.

To the Harbin and Vladivostok Bureaus funds are transmitted from Japan for the refugees. This is of the utmost importance, since prior to the opening of the Bureaus there were practically no means of forwarding money. The value of these Bureaus is recognized by the American Consuls who, too, utilize them occasionally for the transmission of money.

The activities of the Bureaus are twofold; physical and educational.

The physical phase consists in providing shelter, food, clothing, relief, medical treatment, physical examinations, convalescent care, information, guidance, etc., for the refugees. No steamship ticket is obtained for any refugees unless a complete bill of health is given.

The matter of correspondence may too be included in the physical side. Letters for refugees, letters from relatives, communications from Russia, from organizations in America seeking the heads of families already settled here, communications with the main office of the Society in New York and the branches notably those in San Francisco and Seattle—all this means a great deal of energy and calls for the exercise of wise judgment and care.

A very wide area is covered by this voluminous correspondence. Indeed it forms one of the most important activities of the Bureaus since a great deal of the subsequent work depends upon it.

There is another aspect of this physical side that must be dwelt upon. It is but natural that among the thousands of refugees eager to escape from intolerable conditions there should be those who cannot possibly be admitted into the United States. They are simply ineligible. All this has to be explained and

made clear. It is the function of the Bureaus at Harbin, Vladivostok and Yokohama to prevent such making even the attempt to sail for America. The Bureaus are strictly guided by the United States Immigration Laws.

The physical side is of intensely human interest. It calls for the display on the part of the workers of the very quality requisite to the successful handling of the refugees and their manifold wants.

The educational aspect of the work of the Bureaus may too be termed the spiritual. For provision has to be made for the religious needs of the refugees. The employment of a shochet, who is also the mashgiach and chazan at the Yokohama Home was a matter of moment. It meant that the refugees who, it is rightly to be assumed, were observant Jews at home would only be too glad to avail themselves of the opportunity to resume these practices interrupted by untoward conditions. Furnishing the Home with a Sepher Torah, providing prayer books, taleithim and other ritual paraphernalia may appear to the superficial observer as beyond the scope of the relief to be afforded to the refugees. To the student of human psychology, and particularly of the psychology of the Jew these things will suggest themselves among the first to be provided.

It is the duty of the Bureaus to bring home to the refugees who are destined to the United States the message of America and the beneficial effects of Americanization and the urgency of becoming identified with the life of the new country. I had this in mind when I read to the refugees in our Home at Yokohama, Ambassador Morris' appeal for contributions to the American Red Cross, which was voluntarily responded to; the amount collected, Y260, was transmitted through Ambassador Morris. This was a concrete example in Americanization. The classes in English need no special comment, they speak for themselves.

The object of the educational activities is to make the process of adjustment to the new conditions as easy and as quick as possible. The workers bear in mind that the Bureaus are American institutions, and that the work of Americanization must begin before the refugees start on the last stage of their journey to the United States.

The Bureaus on Russian and Manchurian soil are Branches of the Central Information Bureau for Jewish War Sufferers in the Far East. As previously stated the headquarters of the Central Bureau are in our Home at Yokohama.

Prior to my departure from Yokohama I left full instructions—in writing—with Mr. Kasakewitch and Mr. Silberberg who are in full charge of our work in the Far East. These instructions besides dealing with the routine

work, relate to the definite policies of our Society.

The Character of the Refugees

It is very important that I dwell upon the character of the refugees. They are not Bolsheviks nor in any way sympathetic to the Bolsheviks and their regime. They are peace-loving, law-abiding people who under the old regime went about their business. Intensely Jewish they actively participated in every communal endeavor. They fled from intolerable conditions and give evidence of every eagerness to resume their former normal life as speedily as possible. In a word the refugees belong to what may termed the "Bale-batishe" element or as we would say the "Middle-Class."

Our Influence Upon Judaism in Japan

Our operations in the Far East already have had a marked influence upon Jewish life in Japan, and will be of still greater effect in the future.

Up to January 17, 1918, when I unpacked the Scrolls of the Law, which you with so much foresight included among the things I was to take to Japan, there was no semblance of Jewish life anywhere in Japan. It is true that during one summer prior to the outbreak of the war, a small number of wealthy Russian and Austrian Jewish merchants had taken up their residence at the port of Nagassaki, in the extreme southern end of Japan. They erected a small building for use as a synagogue, but since the beginning of hostilities it is closed. All the Russian Jews left and the Austrian Jews retired into seclusion. Nagassaki is about thirty hours by rail from Yokohama and the Jews residing in the latter city with the exception of two, did not know of the existence of the Nagassaki synagogue, until March, when I told them of it, after having received an appeal for matzoths for the coming Passover, from the few Jewish settlers who still remained in Nagassaki.

At our Home in Yokohama a nice room has been fitted up as a synagogue. The Scrolls of the Law, the Megillahs, Schofer, Prayer Books, Bibles, a complete set of the Talmud, Taleithim and Tephillin (Phylacteries) as well as other necessary ritual paraphernalia go to the make up of a well appointed synagogue.

Prayers are held daily morning, afternoon and evening, as well as on Sabbath and on all Jewish holy days. The knowledge of the existence of the synagogue spread throughout the country and Jewish settlers from different parts of Japan came to Yokohama to attend services. Particularly was this so during the Holy Days when memorial services were conducted. Since the opening of the synagogue hardly a week has passed that one or two "Yahrzeits" have not been observed.

The installation of our Kosher Kitchen is another inauguration that will help to intensify the new Jewish life in Japan. Our shochet is the first and only one in that country. Dozens of families who were not known to be Jews at all to most of their acquaintances have since begun to keep Kosher kitchens—with two sets of dishes — and they call frequently at our Home with live poultry to be killed by our shochet. Our Home in Japan is the Jewish Community of Japan. It has become the Jewish center, recognized as such by all. If a Jew anywhere in Japan meets with difficulties, the local police or newspaper immediately communicates with our Home. It is beyond my power to describe the astonishment as well as the feeling of comfort on the part of the unfortunate one when he finds that there is an organization to offer him every protection.

It may interest you to know that while our Home is distinctly Jewish, known and recognized as such by foreigners as well as natives, its official title is "The American House." This is probably due to the fact that it is the only private building in Yokohama or perhaps in the whole of Japan which continuously flies the American flag and to the further fact that English is the official language of the Home.

Seder services were held on Passover for 260 persons in the presence of many residents who were guests of the Society.

One wedding ceremony was performed on March 25th in our synagogue. The bride came from New York, where her parents reside, and the bridegroom was a resident of Japan.

Official Co-operation

In my work I have had the co-operation of the United States Government, the Japanese Government, the British Government officials and the Russian Government officials in Manchuria.

United States Government

Had it not been for the spirit of broad humanitarianism that actuates the administration in Washington, our efforts might have been frustrated at the very outset. War conditions made it necessary for the promulgation of a new policy in regard to the visa of alien passports and the American Consuls in Japan naturally had to guide themselves accordingly. However, due to your prompt action in advising the State Department of the character of our work and thanks to the thorough comprehension of that work by our government officials, some of the greatest difficulties were overcome after the State Department had issued special instructions to the American Consuls at Harbin, Vladivostok, Kobe and Yokohama relative to the passports of women and children—war refugees—who are destined to male relatives in the United States. The consuls

not only followed the letter of the modified instructions of the State Department, but they evidenced too a willingness to reflect the liberal spirit of President Wilson's administration. Having satisfied themselves as to the worthiness and the eligibility of the applicant they promptly vised the passport.

There was one flagrant exception.

There has been complete co-operation between the American Government and its officials in the Far East and ourselves. Through the courtesy of the Hon. George H. Seidmore, American Consul-General at Yokohama, the official cable facilities were placed at our disposal. This proved an inestimable boon.

Mr. Lester L. Schnare, the Vice Consul at Yokohama made himself specially helpful. It was due to his interest that the United States representatives in that city became acquainted with our objects and work.

The fact that the United States government took so deep an interest in our work made it easy for us to secure the good-will of the Japanese, British and Russian authorities.

Japanese Government

To conduct relief activities so closely allied with immigration work—a work that is set within certain bounds by a voluminous act of Congress, and to do that on foreign soil in time of war makes the task exceedingly difficult. When it is borne in mind that the victims of the war—these refugees—are citizens or subjects of the country that had just committed the fatal blunder of deserting the allies and concluding an ignominious peace with the enemy, it will be realized that the work became hazardous as well as difficult. It was not surprising therefore, although very exasperating, that immediately following the announcement of a new policy regarding passport visas by the United States government, the Japanese government should have adopted new regulations governing the admission of aliens into Japan.

On January 24th the Official Gazette published the new immigration regulations of the Imperial Japanese government. You know the details because I mailed you extracts of the new regulations, at the same time informing you of the difficulties encountered as a result. The clause making it imperative for every person entering Japan to be in possession of not less than 250 Yen, and this included children, was the hardest blow Jewish refugees from Russia had to meet. Large families required 250 Yen for every member.

Consulting Ambassador Morris and Dr. Ono, whose acquaintance I made through a letter of introduction by Mr. Schiff, I was able to connect with Dr. Miyaoka, formerly Japanese Minister to Washington. He was good enough to introduce me to the Ministry of the Department for Home Affairs and to Baron Shibusawa.

As the result of the advice tendered me by these gentlemen I presented a formal petition to Baron Goto, then Minister of State for Home Affairs, in which I stated that we would guarantee the Japanese Government that no one admitted into Japan into our custody would ever become a public charge. My petition was filed on February 12th. On March 11th I received a favorable reply in the nature of a permit from Baron Goto through Dr. Miyaoka. Copies of the permit were sent by the Minister to the Governors of all the Prefectures having jurisdiction over Japanese Ports.

The permit is marked "confidential."

I am precluded in consequence from divulging the arrangement arrived at between ourselves and the Japanese government. Suffice it to say that refugees of whom the Society has taken charge are now admitted into Japan.

At Harbin the Japanese Consul kindly consented to waive the 21 days notice required of all travellers through Japan for visaing their passports, if the declaration bore the stamp of the Harbin Bureau.

As the result of my representations special consideration was also given to our Vladivostok Bureau by the Japanese Consul in that city.

The aim and the work of the Society are now well known in Japanese official circles and have met with general approval.

British Government

Owing to the fact that a considerable percentage of refugees from Russia are destined to British territory in various parts of the world, our Society was brought into frequent contact with the British Embassy and British Consulates in Japan. It affords me the utmost pleasure to state that our Society was accorded every, in fact special courtesy by His Britannic Majesty's representatives.

The restrictions on passport visa imposed by the United States Government and the new immigration regulations by Japan were followed by similar restrictions on the part of the British government.

At one time we found ourselves in a great predicament. Four families bound for South Africa were on our hands. These families wandered for three years from Russia across Siberia until they managed to reach Yokohama. Due to sickness, lack of funds and inability to secure steamship accommodations to South Africa they were detained for five months in our care in Yokohama. When all the aforementioned troubles had been overcome the British Consul notified us that the Russian passports held by persons destined to British territory will no longer be visaed. The Consul sympathized with our appeal but he said that he was helpless. He showed us that his instructions were mandatory. Thereupon we appealed to the British Embassy that we would vouch for the loyalty of the persons concerned.

The British officials then kindly consented to accept our statement and favorable action was taken. The four families whose journey from Yokohama to Cape Town lasted sixty days are now reunited with their loved ones.

All ships from Japan bound for British territory, except North America must clear at Hong Kong which is a British port, but no ship is given clearance papers if it has Russian passengers on board, even if these have the visa of the British Consul. It, therefore became necessary for us to start negotiations through the British officials in Japan with the British authorities at Hong Kong. While we did not succeed in bringing about a change of policy as affecting women and children—war refugees—we were successful in securing favorable action upon our appeals for individual cases which required a special order from the Hong Kong authorities, authorizing the British Consul to mark the face of every passport indicating that this visa was authorized by the Hong Kong authorities.

Russian Government Officials in Manchuria

I have to record with satisfaction the surmounting of one of the greatest difficulties which war refugees had to encounter before leaving Russian Manchuria, namely in connection with obtaining foreign passports. That difficulty, as I learned upon my arrival in Harbin, was not a war measure but rather the inherited policy of the old Russian regime, and a source of revenue upon which petty officials had long thrived. Persons who had the price and paid it always secured passports on short notice; all others were compelled to wait several months before their applications were acted on. Since the arrival of moneyless refugees from the interior of Russia into Harbin began to increase, their applications for passports had accumulated in stacks upon the desks of the officials for disposition in the course of the routine. The hungry eyed bribe-takers were awaiting "action" by the impatient applicants. Thus it happened that hundreds of families, without necessary means remained in the slums of Harbin waiting, knowing not why.

As soon as I had satisfied myself of the underlying cause of the delay in issuing these passports, I called on the official in charge, Mr. Sokoloff, former Vice Governor of Manchuria, a gentleman of high standing in the community and who had recently visited the United States. After explaining my mission I was pleased to learn that he already knew of our activities at Yokohama of which he approved. He promised to remedy the conditions I complained of, which, to his credit must be said, were promptly remedied, so that women and children, war refugees, were granted passports upon the certificate of our Harbin Bureau.

At Vladivostok the passport bureau was in

charge of conservative officials who were on friendly terms with the allied government's representatives. My representations there to Mr. Polovinsky resulted in action similar to that in Harbin.

The Needs of the Future

In discussing the needs of the future, this must be borne in mind: Whether we trace refugees or do not, there will always be a natural flow of refugees, principally women and children through Harbin and Vladivostok into Yokohama. Driven on by circumstances they will make their way somehow or other.

There are at Harbin and Vladivostok now about 400 more refugees with whom we are in touch so that added to the 1706 referred to previously the total number thus far traced by our Society is over 2100.

More than 20,000 Jewish war refugees are scattered east of the Urals. This is a conservative estimate. Driven by the enemy thousands of miles away from their homes they went eastward in their flight because their nearest of kin are in the United States. These refugees must claim our attention as did those who succeeded in reaching China and Japan.

They, too, are stranded, but their position is made more precarious by a hostile regime, augmented by the setting loose of thousands of German war prisoners who look upon the Jewish victims as the easiest prey for exercising their ill-concealed desire for vengeance upon their enemies. Thus the plight of the 8,000 Jewish refugees from Kowna and Suwalke Gubernias now in Tomsk was for a time indescribable owing to persecution by the former German prisoners, whom the Bolsheviki permitted to administer and control that city. This was told to me by an intellectual Christian lady at Harbin who managed to escape from Tomsk three weeks prior to my meeting her. Her name is Elena Michalina Alexandrovskaya Gulin and she was then staying at the Hotel Mars, Potshtovaya Ulitsa No. 83, Harbin. She has two sisters Mrs. Witold and Mrs. Wojswillo at 930 Sprague Street, Brockton, Mass.

The most urgent need of all the Jewish refugees in Siberia is to enable them with the consent of the United States Government, if necessary, to establish communication with their kin who reside in the United States.

Our Society has the necessary machinery for this purpose which will assure dispatch as well as results.

The Central Information Bureau with headquarters at Yokohama is in a position to receive all messages, of an approved form by the United States Government, and to send them by courier if necessary to Vladivostok. (This may not be necessary if the allies control the city of Vladivostok). Our Vladivostok Bureau is able to forward all such messages either by post or courier from one community to another

until the addressees are reached. The same method can be applied to outgoing messages from Russia and Siberia.

Remittances and general relief funds could also be transmitted by this method.

In connection with this I desire to make the following recommendation:

That our Society establish a Bureau of Communication, with the consent of the United States Government for the benefit of the Jewish war refugees in Siberia and their relatives in the United States, using as a medium the Central Information Bureau at Yokohama, Vladivostok and Harbin.

The Problem of Transportation

The matter of transportation from the Far East to the American continent is one that gave us great concern.

There are seven Trans-Pacific passenger lines, operating between Japan and the North American Continent, three Japanese, two American, one British, one Dutch.

Two of the Japanese Lines, the Nippon Yusen Kaisha and Osaka Shosen Kaisha have their American terminals at Seattle and Tacoma, Washington, respectively. The third, the Toyo Kisen Kaisha operates to San Francisco, stopping enroute at Honolulu. The Pacific Mail Steamship Company, China Mail Steamship Company and the Royal Nederland Line also operate at San Francisco making stops at Honolulu; the Canadian Pacific Ocean Services, Limited, operates at Vancouver, B. C.

Up to March this year, the Canadian Pacific Ocean Services was unable to accommodate European passengers in its third class reservations, and since May its two largest ships—The "Empress of Asia" and "Empress of Russia", have left the Pacific Service so that this company had since then and until my departure for this country, only two passenger vessels in the Trans-Pacific service, to wit: "Empress of Japan" and "Monteagle." These two steamers have but few third class cabins.

The Royal Nederland Line had only two ships which carried some passengers in the third class—the "Koenigen der Nederland" and the "Princess Juliana." However these ships were withdrawn from Pacific service in the month of May, and the remaining vessels of that line have no third class accommodations at all.

The Pacific Mail Steamship Company operated three vessels—the "Columbia," the "Venezuello" and the "Equador." The third class accommodations are limited to men and these were practically all sold out at the various ports touched by these steamers before they reached Yokohama on their eastward voyage.

The same was true of the China Mail Steamship Company which had but one ship—The "China"—until the month of June when that company acquired the steamship "Nanking."

On July 1st the T. K. K. had the steamships "Tenyo Maru," "Shynio Maru," "Siberia Maru" and "Korea Maru" all having substantial steerage space but very limited accommodations for European third class. This company had more passenger vessels going to San Francisco until May when some of them were withdrawn from the service.

The N. Y. K. and O. S. K. like the T. K. K. operate ships which have substantial steerage space but very limited accommodations for European third class passengers.

Our problem was two-fold; first to secure European third class accommodations on each sailing, and second to secure special accommodations in that class for women and children.

The steamship companies frequently found it impossible to give us both, and it was but seldom that we secured the necessary special space for women and children. Our difficulties can be best imagined when it is considered that women and children constituted about 90 per cent of our wards.

For most of our accommodations we had to look to the Japanese lines, but for the reasons above mentioned they were really unable to give us the desired space. There have been occasions, though, when we were denied space for entirely different reasons, revealed to us several months later. Some of these Steamship Companies had carried Russian passengers from America to Japan shortly after the outbreak of the Russian Revolution. To some of these passengers, that trip to Russia was one continuous joyride. They started to celebrate the revolution as soon as they boarded the ship, regardless of the ship's rules and regulations, which led the officers and crew to protest to the Directors of the Companies against that class of passengers. It resulted in the issue of an order restricting the sale of steamship tickets to Russians. While it was aimed at certain disturbing elements, the new order struck first and hardest, the innocent and peaceful women and children war refugees who themselves sought refuge from the midst of this very disturbing element and barely escaped with their lives.

Thanks to the thoughtfulness, foresight and generosity of Mr. Schiff, a letter of introduction he gave me to Mr. Asano, President of The T. K. K., secured for me an audience with the latter, a broadminded and warm-hearted gentleman, who listened attentively to my representations, with the result that he had promptly issued orders to the office of his company in Yokohama that 40 spaces be reserved on its steamers to San Francisco for our refugees.

That proved a great relief but still not sufficient to meet our pressing needs. The other lines refused to sell us steamship tickets on the usual grounds of "no space available." The pressure of necessity then led us to seek other

avenues of relief. After investigation, we established a temporary base for our activities in Kobe, a Japanese port where most ships touch before proceeding to Yokohama on the eastward voyage. There, we secured a limited number of spaces on some of the vessels and we thus managed to ship in various small groups within a period of three months, a total of 106 refugees.

After learning that the reluctance of the other steamship companies to sell us third class tickets was due partially to their fear of troublesome Russians, we opened negotiations with a view of securing a better understanding on their part of the people we represented. An interview with the heads of the concerns, including Baron Kondo, President of the N. Y. K. secured a promise that this particular objection would be waived thereafter in our cases. That was in the month of June, and we have since then been able to secure a few spaces on all their sailings.

There have been times when we were burdened with 400 women and children pleading to be expedited, however, without relief in sight. That led us to consider the advisability of chartering a vessel for the sole purpose of transporting the entire number of refugees to one port in the United States. After discussing it with an American Consular Official, I began negotiations for chartering a suitable vessel. Ocean-plying ships, not under charter are rarely found nowadays, but we succeeded in finding one at a port on the Inland Sea, namely the "Sylka." We had the ship investigated and reported on, but the agent of the owners or controllers of it insisted upon a guarantee that the ship would not be requisitioned by our Government upon arrival at a United States port. We were therefore compelled to drop the negotiations for the time being.

During the two months prior to the withdrawal of the Steamships "Empress of Asia" and "Empress of Russia" from the Trans-Pacific service of the Canadian Pacific Ocean Services, Limited, 132 women and children sailed on these vessels. The "Empress of Russia" on March 23, carried 86 women and children refugees, in charge of a special matron. Special food in accordance with the Dietary Laws was provided for these refugees by the Steamship Company's agents at Yokohama. This was done in keeping with an agreement come to with the General Passenger Agent of the company prior to my departure from the United States on November last.

THE COST OF OPERATION UP TO DATE

An extract from the financial statement showing what the work has cost will prove interesting.

Receipts:

From November 16, 1917 to July 5,
1918Y95,522.54

Sources of Receipts:

Hebrew Sheltering and Im-
migrant Aid Society of
AmericaY87,917.97
Balance in the hands of
Mr. B. W. Fleisher 2,312.09
Donations in Japan 2,734.08
Refunds, etc. 2,558.40 Y95,522.54

Disbursements:

From January 1st, 1918 to July 1, 1918
Total81,844.79
For Organization, Equip-
ment of the Home in
Yokohama, Renovating
the Home, Maintenance
Salaries, Establishing
the Kosher Kitchen,
Foodstuffs, Cables,
Fares, Printing and
Stationery, Hospital
Treatment, Baths, Dis-
pensary, Etc.Y38,100.71
Emergency Reserve Fund..31,732.23
Yokohama Emigrant Aid
Society 2,847.00
Harbin Bureau 3,200.02
Vladivostok Bureau 1,129.03
Refunds of Deposits 665.00
Executive Expenses 4,170.80 Y81,844.79

Recapitulation:

ReceiptsY95,522.54
Disbursements 81,844.79

Balance.....Y13,677.75

1706 refugees were cared for at the Yokohama Home at a total cost of Y38,100.71. This is Y22.33 or approximately \$11.17 in American money per capita.

Refugees Destined to Other Countries

Reference has already been made to the fact that a considerable percentage of refugees was destined to other countries than the United States, namely, South Africa, South America, etc. This greatly aggravated the situation. The transportation facilities, as has been shown were not too good at any time and in these cases the difficulties became all the greater because it was simply impossible for a long time to secure transportation for families. We were compelled to keep such refugees in Yokohama for several months. This entailed a great expense on our part and worked additional hardships upon the refugees. The state of affairs in regard to these refugees called for the exercise of a great deal of care as well as for patient and painstaking negotiations until transportation was secured.

Cable Addresses

We registered at Yokohama the Society's cable address "HIAS" and in Harbin and Vladivostok the Central Information Bureaus registered cable address is "CIBEGWOD."

T H A N K S**The U. S. Government**

It is impossible to conclude this report without placing on record the services that have been rendered to the Society and through it to the thousands of Jewish refugees by men who had no other motive but that of acting in accordance with their spirit of humanitarianism.

In the first place a tribute must be accorded to the United States Government which through the Hon. Robert Lansing, Secretary of State, the Hon. W. B. Wilson, Secretary of Labor and Mr. Louis F. Post, Assistant Secretary of Labor afforded every cooperation from the very inception of the Society's activities in the Far East. Secretary Lansing and Secretary Post kindly furnished me with personal letters of introduction. It goes without saying that these letters proved an "open sesame" in Japan. Their action reflected the high unselfish principles so characteristic of President Wilson and his administration.

The powerful aid of the United States government made it possible for many difficulties to be overcome and generally smoothed the way to a successful accomplishment of the purposes of my mission.

Mr. Jacob H. Schiff

Mr. Jacob H. Schiff, who has shown every concern in the fate of the unfortunate refugees and whose heart and soul has been in the work, gave me four letters of introduction to gentlemen of the highest standing in Japan. The mere fact that I had come recommended by Mr. Schiff proved of inestimable help. In fact I am sure that so much would not have been accomplished had I not had Mr. Schiff's very influential endorsement.

Letters of Credence

The Society is under a deep debt of gratitude to the Hon. Abram I. Elkus, lately United States Ambassador to Turkey, to Mr. Louis Marshall, President of the American Jewish Committee, to the Hon. Simon Wolf, to the publishers of the New York Jewish dailies, to the Japanese Embassy in the United States and to the Russian Embassy in the United States for their letters of credence as well as for the great interest they displayed in our work.

United States Representatives in the Far East

The Hon. Roland S. Morris, American Ambassador to Japan with whom I have conferred frequently was ever ready with his advice and

suggestions. His counsel proved at all times of service.

The Hon. George H. Seidmore, the American Consul-General at Yokohama, with whom I came into almost daily contact, very kindly placed at my disposal the facilities of his office and any member of his staff who might be helpful. Mr. Seidmore showed a thorough appreciation of the gravity of the situation and of the purposes of our mission.

Acknowledgement must be made of the splendid aid given by Vice Consuls Lester L. Schnare, Henry B. Hitchcock and Paul E. Jenks of the American Consulate at Yokohama.

The Hon. Robert Frazer, Jr., and Hon. Eugene H. Dooman, American Consuls at Kobe and the Hon. John K. Caldwell, American Consul at Vladivostok made themselves specially helpful.

The Japanese Government

Our very best thanks are due to Baron Goto, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Governor Ariyoshi of Kangawa-Ken and Mayor Ando of Yokohama.

Japanese Private Support

It was very encouraging to secure the co-operation and support of Baron Shibusawa, Mr. Inouye, President of the Yokohama Specie Bank, Mr. Asano, President Toyo Kisen Kaisha and Dr. Ono, Vice President Industrial Bank of Japan, personal friends of Mr. Jacob H. Schiff.

I was very fortunate in becoming acquainted through Dr. Ono with Dr. T. Miyaoka, the leading jurist of Japan and former Japanese Minister plenipotentiary to the United States. He quickly realized the importance of the Society's mission and made connections for me with the highest authorities in Japan. Dr. Miyaoka is, too, a personal friend of Mr. Schiff.

Mr. B. W. Fleisher

Through a letter from Mr. Schiff I made the acquaintance of Mr. B. W. Fleisher, the publisher of the well-known daily, the Japan Advertiser. Mr. Fleisher knew of our work for he had apprised Mr. Schiff of the situation relative to the refugees and it was through him that Mr. Schiff forwarded the \$3,000 voted by the Society for the initial outlay of the Society for relief of the refugees. Knowing the state of affairs as he did, Mr. Fleisher apart from the humanitarian instinct that moved him, was able to afford me every advice. He gave a great deal of his time and in every way showed his devotion to the cause we have at heart.

Mr. and Mrs. M. Ginzburg

Reference has been made in the report to the "Ginzburg Home for Russian Emigrants."

From the very outset Mr. Ginzburg and Mrs. Ginzburg were very anxious to relieve the distress of the refugees as much as was possible for them. They expended money, gave personal service and after the Society took charge of the Ginzburg Home continued their co-operation and support.

Mr. Maurice Russel

Mr. Maurice Russel, "The Grand Old Man," among the Jews of Japan, the President of the Jewish Benevolent Society of Yokohama, kindly administered the "Ginzburg Home" before my arrival. Mr. Russel has shown a very kind interest in our work.

Mr. B. Kirschbaum

Mr. B. Kirschbaum was the President of the former Yokohama Emigrant Aid Society which has done real good work. Mr. Kirschbaum as soon as we took charge of the activities in Yokohama turned everything over to our Society, giving us his fullest co-operation.

Mr. Max Sherower, was the Vice President of the Yokohama Emigrant Aid Society. His interest in the welfare of the refugees never lagged. Since we have taken charge, his concern in that direction has become intensified. He is ever ready to be of service.

Mr. Joppe was the Treasurer of the Yokohama Emigrant Aid Society. He has far from given up his connection with the work for the refugees. Mr. Joppe continues his support and is a visitor at the Home from time to time.

Ladies Committee

Earlier in my report I referred to the Ladies Committee organized as an auxiliary of the Ginzburg Emigrant Home. Mesdames Isaacs, Berrick, Neville and Brown willingly co-operated with Mrs. Ginzburg.

Mr. D. Yurovsky is our correspondent at Kobe. He has rendered very valuable services for which we are deeply indebted to him.

Conclusion

This brings to an end the report of six months labors in the Far East. In this account the bare facts have been stated. The first steps only have been taken in this work which in order to be effective must reach much greater proportions than were at first deemed necessary.

Respectfully submitted,
Aug. 12, 1918. SAMUEL MASON.

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